

- Dutton, D. G., & Aaron, A. P. (1974). Some evidence for heightened sexual attraction under conditions of high anxiety. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 30, 510–517.
- Eyal, T., & Epley, N. (2010). How to seem telepathic: Enabling mind reading by matching construal. *Psychological Science*, 21, 700–705.
- Gilbert, D. (2006). *Stumbling on happiness*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Harris, M. M., & Schaubroeck, J. (1988). A meta-analysis of self-supervisor, self-peer, and peer-supervisor ratings. *Personnel Psychology*, 41, 43–62.
- Hodliff, M. (2014). *The development and validation of the employee resilience scale (EmpRes): The conceptualization of a new model* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.
- Idris, M. K. (2011). Over time effects of role stress on psychological strain among Malaysian public university academics. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2, 154–161.
- Karimi, R., Omar, Z. B., Alipour, F., & Karimi, Z. (2014). The influence of role overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity on occupational stress among nurses in selected Iranian hospitals. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 4(1), 34–40.
- Mabe, P. A., III, & West, S. G. (1982). Validity of self-evaluation of ability: A review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 67, 280–286.
- Risucci, D. A., Torolani, A. J., & Ward, R. J. (1989). Ratings of surgical residents by self, supervisors and peers. *Surgical Gynecology and Obstetrics*, 169, 519–526.
- Ungar, M. (2003). Qualitative contributions to resilience research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 2, 85–102.

Resilient Employees in Resilient Organizations: Flourishing Beyond Adversity

Joana R. C. Kuntz, Katharina Näswall, and Sanna Malinen
University of Canterbury

Britt, Shen, Sinclair, Grossman, and Klieger (2016) offer compelling arguments for the need to consider resilience trajectories and to identify the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual factors accountable for unique trajectories. We welcome the call for more focused research efforts toward uncovering the role of resilience in organizations and concur with Britt et al. that there is a need for a clearer characterization of resilience among employees, the correlates of resilience, and the way that resilience can be facilitated. Our objective here is to build on the main thrust of Britt et al.'s focal article by outlining a novel perspective on employee resilience, which we believe

Joana R. C. Kuntz and Katharina Näswall, Department of Psychology, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand; Sanna Malinen, Department of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Joana R. C. Kuntz, Department of Psychology, University of Canterbury, PB 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. E-mail: joana.kuntz@canterbury.ac.nz

will constitute an important contribution to the organizational resilience literature.

The focal article's recommendations are grounded on the assumption that the capacity for and demonstration of resilience are dependent on exposure to significant adversity or trauma, and the article posits that managing psychosocial risk factors in the workplace (i.e., adversity mitigation) may prove a fruitful avenue to maintaining employee resilience. We contend that predicating our understanding of employee resilience exclusively on responsiveness to significant adverse events restricts the scope of the construct. In essence, conceptualizing employee resilience solely under the lens of positive response to significant adversity may bind us to a post-traumatic growth perspective (i.e., positive adaptation *contingent* on crisis exposure) and detract from the consideration of resilience as a capability that can be developed and enacted in both stable and crisis environments. Considering employee resilience in noncrisis contexts refocuses our attention on the possibility of proactive resilience development, ensuring both continuous improvement in routine situations and adaptive responses to major adversity. This conceptualization invites the investigation of resilience-promoting factors that are part of business as usual and that all employees may experience.

The view of resilience outlined in our commentary emphasizes the importance of a resilience-enabling organizational environment during times of stability that ensures resilience in the event of a crisis. Building on recently advanced notions of inherent and adaptive resilience (Cutter et al., 2008; Nilakant et al., in press), we posit that employee resilience can be enacted across a range of environments, including business-as-usual contexts, provided the organization enables its ongoing development among workers. In what follows, we will expand and elaborate on what this perspective entails for the study of employee resilience and what opportunities this conceptualization of resilience offers for employees and organizations. The resilience perspective discussed herein is based on the following tenets: (a) Employee resilience can be manifested in both stable and adverse conditions, (b) employee and organizational resilience capabilities that are proactively developed in stable environments (i.e., inherent resilience) will be associated with the resilience levels developed and exhibited under significant adversity (i.e., adaptive resilience), and (c) the onus for developing resilience does not rest solely on the employee, as resilience building comprises a reciprocal process involving employees and their organization.

Challenging the Assumption of Significant Adversity as a Resilience Catalyst

The capacity to exhibit an adaptive response to significant adversity remains the epitome of resilience, a notion that echoes the prevalent outlook in the

individual resilience literature (Bonnano, 2004; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Harland, Harrison, Jones, & Reiter-Palmon, 2005; Stephens, Heaphy, Carmeli, Spreitzer, & Dutton, 2013) and intersects the recommendations put forth in the focal article. This outlook is further reinforced in the organizational resilience research domain, where resilience is viewed as a capability both essential to, and inextricable from, crisis and risk management (e.g., van der Vegt, Essens, Wahlstrom, & George, 2015). Although advances in individual resilience research have long departed from a restoration of equilibrium perspective in favor of a learning and continual growth viewpoint (e.g., Youssef & Luthans, 2005), resilience is still largely discussed as signaling responsiveness to severe adversity, and less attention has been given to the potential for this capability to evolve in the context of typical challenges at work. In contrast, recent calls for research suggest a move from this traditional adversity responsiveness approach to one that emphasizes ongoing capability creation and sustainability (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003; van der Vegt et al., 2015). We propose that the combination of these approaches offers the most useful conceptualization of the resilience construct. Individuals and organizations are resilient to the extent that they engage in a deliberate, continuing process of developing resilience capabilities. This is akin to the notion of inherent resilience mentioned above (Cutter et al., 2008; Nilakant et al., in press). Inherent resilience describes the development of resilience capability in an environment characterized by low to moderate levels of adversity exposure (i.e., business as usual), to the extent that individuals are provided with the necessary resources for capability development (e.g., performance feedback, peer and managerial support). On the other hand, adaptive resilience refers to effective responsiveness to instances of significant adversity. Evidence from organizations operating in pre- and postdisaster environments suggests that inherent resilience prior to exposure to a significant adverse event is associated with adaptive resilience, operationalized as business growth and employee engagement and well-being in the months and years following a major crisis (Nilakant et al., in press). Whether inherent resilience represents a prerequisite to adaptive resilience or whether the former merely constitutes one of several predictors of the latter remains to be empirically verified. Nevertheless, the preliminary evidence summarized above suggests that the mechanisms and resources that underpin adaptive resilience do not differ substantially from those involved in inherent resilience, namely, the role of organizations as enablers of employee resilience development.

A New Perspective on Resilience Development in Organizations

Inherent and adaptive resilience comprise critical elements of resilience capabilities in organizations, the former by increasing organizational preparedness for future challenges and the latter by ensuring adaptive response

to crises (Cutter et al., 2008; Nilakant et al., in press). It is therefore important to identify the factors and mechanisms that contribute to their development. Recent research suggests that, beyond safeguarding infrastructural preparedness and creating a learning-oriented organizational culture, developing and maintaining employee well-being and engagement are foundational to ensuring inherent resilience capability (Nilakant et al., in press). The fact that well-being and engagement comprise core elements of resilience capability reinforces the need for organizations to establish an enabling context for these elements to develop. As suggested in the focal article, resilience is *demonstrated* via indicators of positive adaptation, which include well-being in addition to business growth. In our view, resilience is signaled by behaviors that contribute to increasing organizational resources, which result in, and can in turn be aided by, improved levels employee well-being, engagement, and performance. This view signals the need for change in organizational outlook on resilience management. While organizations acknowledge the importance of developing resilience among employees, resilience building to date has most often been associated with “hardiness training” and other personal resilience-oriented activities, typically disconnected from everyday work demands and context. The conventional and still often espoused approach to resilience development is therefore grounded on individual-centric interventions. We propose that this approach should be replaced or at least supplemented by a strategy that comprises the mutual enhancement of employee and organizational capabilities via resource provision and the continual minimization of hurdles. Organizations stand to gain from considering people management strategies that embed resilience building into business as usual (Deville, Gist, & Cotton, 2006; Grawitch, Gottschalk, & Munz, 2006; Varker & Devilly, 2012), rather than investing in targeted resilience interventions, which may have limited transferability to the occupational context. Integrating resilience building with organizational functioning would also address a problem raised by Britt et al.: the tendency for “blaming the victim” by placing the onus of resilience building on employees. The need to consider the organization’s health in addition to the health and resilience levels among employees when managing stress and resilience has been argued for (e.g., Devilly et al., 2006). This is consistent with our view that resilience should signify the mutual enhancement of employees and organizations. Such a perspective implies shared responsibility for resilience building. In practice, the organization offers a context for resilience promotion, and employees utilize the resources available to engage in resilient behaviors, which in turn develop and sustain resilience capability. This reciprocal responsibility approach also suggests that, rather than selecting for resilience, organizations can support employee resilience among their staff by crafting a resilience-promoting environment. For ex-

ample, resilient employee behaviors such as developing innovative solutions and making suggestions for operational changes to how the work is done require an organizational environment that fosters autonomous decision making and accountability for results, two factors that have long been identified as essential to positive well-being and performance outcomes (cf. Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

An important point to make is that we do not deem employees resilient if they are simply “getting by” under significant adversity. Recommendation 6 in the focal article suggests that there is dark side to resilience. Indeed, working under sustained exposure to major challenges can lead to negative outcomes, such as burnout and fatigue (Kuntz, 2015). Our conceptualization of employee resilience is based on the fact that positive, proactive behaviors are inextricably linked to supportive and development-oriented working environments. The negative outcomes of persevering (such as burnout) are usually observed when organizations are not enabling to the extent necessary. We propose that resilient behaviors among employees will be related to positive outcomes, even when circumstances are challenging or highly stressful, but only to the extent that the organization fosters a resilience-building context. This is in line with theories on the importance of resources that allow for proactive coping strategies (cf. Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which suggest that severe adversity can be endured for a period of time and eventually overcome if adequate support is provided.

Directions for Future Research

Frequent organizational changes and increased uncertainty require that employees learn to operate effectively under quantitatively and qualitatively diverse environmental demands. Hence, we propose an operational definition of employee resilience as a suite of workplace behaviors that signal both inherent and adaptive resilience (Näswall, Kuntz, Hodliffé, & Malinen, 2015). This operationalization facilitates a holistic appraisal of the extent to which both employees and the organization are prepared to handle challenges that occur as part of a fast-changing and often unpredictable business environment. We suggest that employees are resilient to the extent that they exhibit inherent resilience, reflected on responsiveness to incremental changes that occur routinely; preparedness for a range of potential adverse events; and the capacity to develop solutions that substantively improve organizational functioning. Further, and consistent with the traditional view, positive adaptive behaviors during and following significant adverse events are also indicative of employee resilience. We define employee resilience as the capacity of employees to utilize resources in order to continually adapt and flourish at work, even when faced with adversity. The demonstration of resilient be-

haviors is predicated on the organization's and its leaders' ability to create an environment that enables and supports employees.

The behavioral approach to employee resilience presented in this commentary denotes the importance of fostering supportive and proactive work behaviors, which are germane to adaptation across a range of situations and result in positive workplace outcomes. This approach is grounded on three assumptions: (a) Employee resilience is an individual behavioral capability that can be developed, (b) resilient employee behaviors will be enacted to the extent that resilience-promoting factors (i.e., interpersonal and organizational enablers) are present, and (c) the construct reflects the capacity not only to adapt to a crisis but also to proactively seek opportunities for improvement in stable environments. Fostering the development of employee resilience under favorable conditions, as part of routine organizational functioning, will substantially aid the enactment of resilience in adverse circumstances. We suggest that there is an opportunity for organizations to increase their capacity for resilience in a cost-effective manner, both at the organizational and employee levels, by embedding resilience-building practices within everyday work. This will not only ensure better preparedness in the event of a crisis but also improve overall organizational functioning and performance outcomes.

References

- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The job demands-resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 22*(3), 309–328.
- Bonnano, G. (2004). Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? *American Psychologist, 59*(1), 20–28.
- Britt, T. W., Shen, W., Sinclair, R. R., Grossman, M. R., & Klieger, D. M. (2016). How much do we really know about employee resilience? *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice, 9*(2), 378–404.
- Cutter, S., Barnes, L., Berry, M., Burton, C., Evans, E., Tate, E., & Webb, J. (2008). A place-based model for understanding community resilience to natural disasters. *Global Environmental Change, 18*(4), 598–606.
- Devilley, G. J., Gist, R., & Cotton, P. (2006). Ready! Fire! Aim! The status of psychological debriefing and therapeutic interventions: In the workplace and after disasters. *Review of General Psychology, 10*(4), 318–345.
- Fletcher, D., & Sarkar, M. (2013). Psychological resilience: A review and critique of definitions, concepts and theory. *European Psychologist, 18*(1), 12–23.
- Grawitch, M. J., Gottschalk, M., & Munz, D. C. (2006). The path to a healthy workplace: A critical review linking healthy workplace practices, employee well-being, and organizational improvements. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 58*(3), 129–147.
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976). Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 16*, 250–279.

- Harland, L., Harrison, W., Jones, J., & Reiter-Palmon, R. (2005). Leadership behaviors and subordinate resilience. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 11(2), 2–14.
- Kuntz, J. C. (2015). Protracted effect: Surveying teachers' experiences in the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquakes. *Natural Hazards Review*, 16(1), 1–13. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)NH.1527-6996.0000147](http://dx.doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)NH.1527-6996.0000147)
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Näswall, K., Kuntz, J., Hodliffe, M., & Malinen, S. (2015). *Employee Resilience Scale (EmpRes): Technical report* (Resilient Organisations Research Report No. 2013/06). Christchurch, New Zealand: University of Canterbury.
- Nilakant, V., Walker, B., Kuntz, J., de Vries, H., Malinen, S., Näswall, K., & van Heugten, S. (in press). Dynamics of organizational response to a disaster: A study of organizations impacted by earthquakes. In C. M. Hall, S. Malinen, R. Wordsworth, & R. Vosslander (Eds.), *Business and disaster management: Business, organisational and consumer resilience and the Christchurch Earthquakes*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Stephens, J. P., Heaphy, E. D., Carmeli, A., Spreitzer, G. M., & Dutton, J. E. (2013). Relationship quality and virtuousness: Emotional carrying capacity as a source of individual and team resilience. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 49(1), 13–41.
- Sutcliffe, K. M., & Vogus, T. J. (2003). Organizing for resilience. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline* (pp. 94–110). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Van der Vegt, G., Essens, P., Wahlstrom, M., & George, G. (2015). Managing risk and resilience. *Academy of Management Journal*, 58(4), 971–980.
- Varker, T., & Devilly, G. J. (2012). An analogue trial of inoculation/resilience training for emergency services personnel: Proof of concept. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 26(6), 696–701.
- Youssef, C. M., & Luthans, F. (2005). Resiliency development of organizations, leaders and employees: Multi-level theory building for sustained performance. In W. Gardner, B. Avolio, & F. Walumbwa (Eds.), *Authentic leadership theory and practice: Origins, effects and development* (Vol. 3, pp. 303–343). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Integrating Multiple Perspectives Into the Study of Resilience

Samantha C. January
Texas A&M University

Resilience has become a popular buzzword in society today, both inside and outside academia. If you look at the mission statement of most companies nowadays, you are likely to come across some form of the term resilience. The United States Army has adopted The Ready and Resilient Campaign,

Samantha C. January, Department of Psychology, Texas A&M University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Samantha C. January, Department of Psychology, Texas A&M University, 4235 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4235. E-mail: schalupa@tamu.edu